



**Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona**

PRESS RELEASE

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DEFENDANT ARRESTED FOR IDENTITY THEFT AND FRAUD ON TUCSON BUSINESSES AND ORDERED TRANSFERRED TO TUCSON

TUCSON, Ariz. -- Janet Helms, 64, formerly of Silver City, New Mexico, was arrested on December 6, 2004, in Menifee, California, by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 10 counts of Aiding and Abetting Identity Theft, Unlawful Use of a Social Security Account Number, Submitting a False Loan Application to a Federally Insured Financial Institution and Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property. Defendant Helms, and her co-defendant Tommy Joe Coplen, 62, also formerly of Silver City, New Mexico, were indicted by a federal grand jury on December 1, 2004. Defendants Coplen and Helms defrauded 3 financial institutions in Tucson and Mesa, Arizona, by using the names and social security account numbers of other individuals to obtain loans to purchase a truck, a 5th Wheel trailer and a boat. The total loss due to defendants's fraudulent activities, including fraudulent use of credit card purchases and cash advances in several other states, is approximately \$273,291.

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On December 8, 2004, defendant Helms appeared in United States District Court in Riverside, California and was ordered detained and removed to the District of Arizona, Tucson Division, to be arraigned here on these charges on January 5, 2005. Defendant Coplen remains a fugitive; he is a former federal prison inmate at FCI in Tucson, Arizona.

The crime of Making a False Statement to Federally Insured Financial Institution, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1014, is a felony punishable by 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. The crime of Fraud in Connection with Identification Documents and Information (Identity Theft), in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1028(a)(7), is a felony punishable by 3 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The crime of Fraudulent Use of Social Security Account Number, in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 408(a)(7), is a felony punishable by 3 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The crime of Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2314, is a felony punishable by 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The crime of Aiding and Abetting, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2 is punishable to the same extent as the underlying crime.

The indictment also has a Criminal Forfeiture Allegation seeking forfeiture of the truck, 5th Wheel and boat, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1028(b)(5) and 18 U.S.C. § 982(a)(2)(B).

The investigation in this case was conducted by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Division. The prosecution is being handled by Danny N. Roetzel, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity, and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

CASE: CR-04-02440-TUC
RELEASE: 2004-195

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